

WGTH PROBLEMS & PROGRAMS LIST

SECOND QUARTER 2012

APRIL - JUNE

CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL DRUG DISTRIBUTION/CITIZEN HELP

Although Southwest Virginia is a naturally beautiful area with very hospitable people, drug abuse has seriously taken its toll on the families and communities here. Drug dealers and distributors have been responsible for much heartache... addiction, drug-related burglaries and other crimes, and even death.

Program: Interview with Tazewell County Commonwealth's Attorney, Dennis Lee, following a press conference about a round up of drug dealers and distributors

Date: June 22, 2012 (aired at 10:05 a.m. and 7:05 p.m.)

Guest: Dennis Lee, Tazewell County Commonwealth's Attorney

WGTH was invited to participate in a press conference in which an announcement was made regarding a recent round up of drug offenders. All the members of the Tazewell County Drug Task Force were there, including: Tazewell County Commonwealth's Attorney, Dennis Lee; Major Harold Heatley and 1st Sgt. Charles Parsons of the Virginia State Police; Brian Hieatt, Tazewell County Sheriff; Frank Dorton, Chief of Police for the Town of Richlands; David Mills, Chief of Police for the Town of Cedar Bluff; and Dewitt Cooper, the new Chief of Police for the Town of Tazewell.

The Tazewell County Drug Task Force announced a total of 52 indictments on 47 individuals, including 138 charges for criminal activity regarding the illegal distribution of prescription drugs. A private interview was granted to WGTH at the conclusion of the press conference by

Tazewell County Commonwealth's Attorney, Dennis Lee.

Dennis Lee talked about the negative reputation of Tazewell County as the "epicenter" of the prescription drug problem in Southwest Virginia. Lee called the distributors of drugs "unscrupulous and immoral" and claimed that they were "feeding the addiction" of the users in Tazewell County. He gave credit to the hard work performed by the law enforcement officers that spent numerous hours over several months collecting conclusive evidence in order to obtain convictions against the individuals that were charged. Lee explained that the task force was pursuing those involved in distribution in order to get to the major dealers and "king pins" that were the prime sources of the area's drug abuse problems. He accused them of destroying lives and homes for selfish monetary gain.

The most commonly abused drugs were also discussed. Lee explained the unknown dangers of the popular "bath salts" that he said were amphetamines with halucenogens. He likened them to PCP in that they are extremely unpredictable and can cause extremely aggressive and irrational behavior. Drug companies that produced such drugs were, in essence, "dealers" themselves according to Lee. The sale of the chemical contents and configurations that make up bath salts would become illegal in Virginia on July 1, 2012. However, Lee felt certain there would be others developed and marketed that are not yet illegal.

Opana was named as a drug of choice, but - as with oxycontin - the company making the drug is rapidly trying to make it in a crush-proof pill form so that it will be much less desirable for abusers. He expressed grave concern over the distribution of heroin charge... stating that it was a first in Tazewell County to his knowledge.

Dennis Lee encouraged citizens to continue to report any suspicious activity. Lee stated that several of the 52 current indictments began with investigations as a result of tips from citizens.

Although Lee is pleased that progress has been made to put away drug dealers and distributors, he says it is "like the ambulance showing up

after the crash." Drug prevention and rehabilitation are two areas that Lee, personally, feels have not been pursued enough.

THE BATTLE AGAINST CANCER

One common enemy that knows no demographic limitations is cancer. Although it comes in different types and stages and locations, cancer is a disease that everyone would love to see eradicated as quickly as possible.

Program: "Relay for Life" (pre-recorded) informational segments

Dates: June 4 - 9, 2012 (aired throughout the day)

Guest: Mandy Harris, spokesperson for the local "Relay for Life" event

One fight in which everyone in the community seems to be on the same side is the fight against cancer. Long lists of cancer victims appear on prayer lists, and obituaries frequently include long battles with cancer. It is an ugly and unrelenting disease for which everyone would love to see a cure.

Research and treatments are quite costly. One great event that has proven very effective in raising large donations, as well as cancer awareness and hope for a cure, is the "Relay for Life." Many participating teams have been together for years and work to raise funds toward their generous goals throughout the year prior to the June event.

Mandy Harris was this year's spokesperson for the Relay for Life that is held annually at Southwest Virginia Community College. She gave details about the specifics regarding this year's event and invited all the listeners to participate in any or all of the activities included in the Relay for Life. One very special activity, for example, is the "Survivor Walk" in which former cancer victims walk laps around the track to celebrate their victories and encourage those still in the fight. Children, also, have several opportunities to support friends and family members.

CARING FOR OUR SENIORS

Health care issues are in the news daily, and senior citizens are among the most vulnerable of all demographic groups. Not only is their physical health a concern, but their mental health is a key to their overall well-being. A large part of the problem of either kind of health care is that many seniors do not have people who can look after them with constant care.

Program: The Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens' "Spring Fling"
Health Fair (pre-recorded informational segments)

Dates: May 15 - 19, 2012 (aired throughout the day)

Guest: Chase Meade Patton, spokesperson for the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens

The Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (AASC) has looked after the needs of area seniors for many years by offering services within the agency to assist in the health and welfare of those eligible. They have also participated in health fairs and other community activities to be of service and to increase awareness of all that they offer. In the past few years, they have established their own "Spring Fling" Health Fair in which they can help seniors - and participants of all ages - monitor their health and enjoy some family style fun.

Chase Meade Patton, from AASC, acted as the spokesperson for the agency and invited listeners to the "Spring Fling" event. Welcoming folks of all ages, Chase gave the important information and a verbal listing of the types of entertaining activities that would be offered.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN RECOGNIZED FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Although there are many wonderful opportunities for the education of special needs children, they seldom get to participate in large scale physical activity in which they can "showcase" their abilities and receive recognition

as champions. The opportunity to do this increases self-esteem and self-respect. Additionally, the close contact and interaction between the special needs children and the normally-gifted students boost mutual respect and admiration.

Program: Kiwanis Field Day (segments recorded at the event)

Date: May 3, 2012 (previous day's recorded segments played at 7:40 a.m. and 8:40 a.m.)

Guests: Kathy Payne, Kiwanis president; Beth Smith, Key Club sponsor; Vickie England, Kiwanis member; Ginger Branton, volunteer
Key Club members: McKinsley Bales, Hannah Hearl, Nicole Elswick, Keisha Lynch, and Austin Carter

The Richlands Kiwanis Club partners with its Richlands High School Key Club to sponsor a very special annual field day. Richlands High School teacher and Key Club sponsor, Beth Smith, and the Key Club members work very hard to prepare a large variety of field day events for special needs students from the local schools.

Kiwanis president, Kathy Payne, and Beth Smith talked about the involvement of Kiwanis and the Key Club in the field day. Kathy and Beth praised the Key Club members for their excellent preparation and hard work that day. Vickie England and Ginger Branton talked about the excitement and enthusiasm that the special needs students exhibited. Apparently, the field day is something the students look forward to all year.

Key Club members: McKinsley Bales, Hannah Hearl, Nicole Elswick, Keisha Lynch, and Austin Carter shared some of their experiences with the students during their assigned events or duties. The comments they made indicated that they enjoyed working with the students and seeing their smiling faces... especially after accomplishing the completion of an event and receiving a lot of attention and praise.

HELPING STUDENTS BECOME SAFER DRIVERS

So many teenage lives are lost in careless crashes; and, too frequently, these tragedies come at times that should be full of joy and celebration. Prom nights and graduations are sometimes ruined by the loss of one or more students in vehicular crashes. Feelings of invincibility, inexperience in driving situations, a great desire to demonstrate passage to adulthood by using and abusing alcohol are just a few possible reasons for poor judgment and inability to properly control a vehicle. Sadly, many victims are not the ones that are at fault.

Program: Mock Car Crash description and testimony of real life tragedies recorded at the scene the day prior (Richlands High School track)

Date: May 5, 2012 (8:40 a.m. on the morning of Prom 2012 at RHS)

Guest: Rick Blevins, Richlands High School teacher of First Aid and CPR classes and mock crash coordinator

According to Rick Blevins, Richlands High School teacher and coach, several of his students had heard of other schools warning their students about the dangers involved with drinking and driving through the use of simulated situations surrounding the loss of one or more students on prom night. The students asked Rick if they could set one up prior to the prom at Richlands High School. Although there was very little time, Rick and the students got busy and put on a fairly complex production.

The "victims" were already dead at the scene when the students that would be attending prom came out to the football stadium to witness the events. As the drama unfolded, the driver realized what he had done and could not contain his grief. The police came and took him away after a brief interrogation and observation of the scene. A lengthy time was spent clearing bodies from the site of the "accident." The Virginia State Police MedFlight helicopter even flew an injured student to the closest trauma center, while ambulances and rescue squad vehicles were on hand to transport the less seriously injured.

For the parents and other adults in attendance, it was all too real. The student actors and rescue personnel did a wonderful job making it appear authentic. There was a funeral and a criminal trial scene, also. At the close, Rick spoke to the students about the grief and sadness involved with the loss of friends and loved ones. He shared his experiences in doing the funerals of several of his former students and wrestlers... emphasizing the gravity of the situation and the hardship on the families.

Rick and his students were hoping to make an impact on the RHS prom-goers. Hopefully, that would be the only "impact" they would experience that weekend. (Thankfully, there were no accidents reported that prom night.)

FOOD FOR THOSE IN NEED

The needs continue to mount and the supplies diminish at local food pantries as the failing economy produces greater hardship on individuals and families. Job losses make it very difficult to provide even the necessities for the households affected. Food and sundries are in great demand.

Program: Announcements regarding the "Governor's Bowl" Food Drive
(aired throughout the day)

Dates: June 4 - 29, 2012

Guest: Ginger Branton, Executive Director of the Richlands Area Chamber of Commerce

Virginia's Governor Bob McDonnell issued the first "Governor's Bowl" Food Drive challenge to chambers of commerce throughout the Commonwealth in order to assist in restocking shelves of local food pantries everywhere throughout Virginia. The summer months tend to be the most difficult time to keep pantries supplied. Businesses and individuals were challenged to collect one can for each of the 38 days during the time period

from May 28th through July 4th.

Ginger Branton, Executive Director of the Richlands Area Chamber of Commerce, explained the campaign to the listeners and issued her own challenge to businesses and individuals in the Richlands Area to take cans to the Chamber office. Then, the Chamber would send them on to the Good Samaritan Food Pantry. The local slogan was "One Can a Day Keeps Hunger Away." The Chamber's goal was set at 100 participants.

(Note: The response was good and 113 participants brought 38 cans each.)

TOURISM

Tourism is one resource that can boost the economy of a locale. Special events tend to bring in a lot of out-of-towners and cause local residents to spend more money locally. Additionally, community pride increases when a locality is able to "showcase" its uniquely desirable qualities.

Program: Informational segments about the 31st Honaker Redbud Festival

Dates: April 16 - 21, 2012 (aired throughout the day)

Guests - The following Honaker Redbud Festival Committee members each spoke about events with which they were familiar:

Charity Run/Family Walk - C. H. Wallace

Canoe Race - C. H. Wallace

Fun Day Entertainment - Evan Rasnake

Redbuds & Bluegrass Mountain Music Festival - Jim Baldwin

Bird & Wildflower Walk - Jim Baldwin

Pet Show - Diane Fuller

Redbud Festival Breakfast - Carolyn Puckett

Family Fun Day - Carolyn Puckett

Arts & Crafts Show - Carolyn Puckett

Car & Truck Show - Jim Taylor

The Honaker Redbud Festival is an annual event that showcases the

lovely mountain town of Honaker, Virginia, and attracts many from outside the community. Although Honaker hosts several large events a year, this one is the main event. Tourism, although a small industry, means a great deal to the economy of Honaker, and the local businesses welcome the extra attention they receive during the festival.

WGTH meets with the committee members prior to the festival in order to record the members touting the specific events in which they are involved. The informational segments allow listeners to be present at the right time and place for the events in which they wish to participate.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORY

Historic preservation is extremely important in order to develop an understanding regarding the unique background of a locality, to acquire knowledge regarding its natural and manmade resources, and to appreciate its value to those that established it and to those that live there now.

Program: Informational segments regarding "The Skirmish at Jeffersonville"

Dates: April 16 - 21, 2012 (aired throughout the day)

Guest: Charlotte Whitted, Executive Director of the Historic Crab Orchard Museum

One of many of the rich aspects of Tazewell County's history is its involvement in *The War Between the States*. "The Skirmish at Jeffersonville" is a reenactment of a real skirmish that occurred on or near the site where the reenactors camp and perform. One of the many reasons that "Jeffersonville," as it was called then, was so important is its proximity to Saltville where the crucial salt mines were located.

Charlotte Whitted, Executive Director of Historic Crab Orchard Museum, always does an excellent job creating authentic audio atmosphere when she records her info-bits for the skirmish. With dulcimer music in the

background, her script captures your attention as if you are in the time period. Her invitation includes all the necessary particulars for the many listeners that enjoy "stepping back in time."

The museum offers a tremendous amount of information about local history... the people, places, and circumstances that made Tazewell County what it is today. There are many trained volunteers, including a large number of children, that can give verbal history information. A goodly number of hands-on opportunities are available, as well.